UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2002/6
17 August 2001

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-eighth session
Item 8 of the provisional agenda

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Note verbale dated 12 June 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Commission on Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the secretariat of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights and has the honour to communicate the following information regarding the incident of 12 November when a tracer bullet was fired at a vehicle escorting the United Nations High Commissioner, Mary Robinson, during her visit to the region last year.

Since then, on several occasions, including at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights, harsh accusations have been made against Israel alleging that it was Jewish settlers who had opened fire on the High Commissioner's convoy, and even alleging that Israel had tried to kill Mary Robinson.

Until now, it has not been clearly demonstrated what actually occurred at that time. However, the Israeli authorities have recently received the official results of the ballistics expertise carried out by the Danish police. The results indicate that the shot fired at the vehicle of the High Commissioner was from a Kalashnikov AK-47 rifle (a weapon that is not standard issue in the Israeli army) and originated from a house in the H1 area, north of Bab Al-Zawiya (an area under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority). The 15th Periodic Report of the Temporary International Presence in the City of Hebron (TIPH), an international observer mission, includes this information.

Please find enclosed herewith the relevant page of the TIPH Report addressing the results of the ballistics expertise, as well as a letter form the Head of Mission of TIPH addressed to the Minister of Local Government of the Palestinian Authority and the Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, scheduling a Monitoring and Steering Committee meeting at which the report will be discussed.

The Permanent Mission of Israel requests that this note and its attached documents* be circulated to all members of the Commission on Human Rights.

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* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

Annex

Excerpts from the 15th periodic report of the Temporary International Presence in the City of Hebron (TIPH):

... deliberate way, turned the long headlights on when a TIPH member got off the patrol vehicle. Blinded by the lights, the patrol members eventually had to drive in reverse in order to leave the spot.

o *2.2.3. Shooting against TIPH*

On 16 February, shooting erupted close to the TIPH Headquarters. Even though the TIPH Headquarters were never a target, tracer shots were observed passing close by, indicating that the premises were in the line of fire. Bullets injured two Palestinians in their home, next to TIPH Base 2. The incident appeared to have been caused by an IDF operation against a Palestinian farm across the border of the TIPH AOR. The night before this incident, a tracer bullet was observed passing 10-15 meters in front of a TIPH patrol vehicle that was virtually alone on the road. No exchange of fire was reported in the area.

Regarding an incident on 12 November 2000, when a tracer bullet was fired at a TIPH vehicle escorting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mrs. Robinson on a visit to Tel Rumeida, TIPH received the results of a ballistic expertise carried out by the Danish Police. The expertise showed that the shot was fired from a Kalashnikov AK-47 rifle. Moreover, a reconstruction conducted by TIPH personnel in co-operation with the Danish experts clearly designated the origin of the shot: a house in the H1 area, north of Bab Al-Zawiya

2.3. Working relations with the Israeli side

TIPH and the IDF have in the current period had a good co-operation. IDF and TIPH Liaison Officers had contacts on a daily basis, and made efforts to solve incidents directly. In most cases, an effective co-operation was established. However, in one case when a TIPH patrol was denied access to the area of Tel Rumeida, contacts between the TIPH and IDF Liaisons enabled the patrol to enter the area after more than two and a half hours. Moreover twice in the period under review, TIPH patrols experienced difficulties with soldiers refusing to remove barriers for TIPH vehicles.

The co-ordination in cases concerning the safety of TIPH observers was good. Unfortunately there has been only one JHC meeting in this period, but there have been several bilateral meetings between TIPH and the IDF.

TIPH presented a total of 470 cases to the IDF. The reports were presented to the IDF under the following categories: 275 cases were presented for clarification and 195 for information. It must be stressed that not all of the reports presented for information were related to IDF activities, but nevertheless sent to the IDF since the incidents reported took ...

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Our ref. Date 4 June 2001

Dr. Saeb Erakat, Minister of Local Government, Palestinian Authorities

Mr. Avi Gil, Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry

MEETING IN THE TIPH MONITORING AND STEERING COMMITTEE

Sirs,

I would like to take the initiative to schedule the next Monitoring and Steering Committee meeting.

The Periodical Report no 15 for the period 1 February – 30 April is delivered by hand to your office today.

I suggest the report to be discussed in the MSC meeting.

At the same time it is possible to discuss former Periodical Reports covering the period from the last meeting in the MSC (reports no XI, XII, XIII and XIV).

I would also like to discuss the situation for the children in Hebron, and the security for the TIPH observers.

I suggest the following dates: Sunday 10 June, Monday 11 June or Tuesday 12 June.

I further propose the meeting to be held at the Inbar Hotel (former Laromme Hotel) in Jerusalem. If you prefer a different venue please let me know.

Yours truly,

Karl-Henrik Sjursen
Head of Mission

TIPH is an international observer mission. The mandate of TIPH is to assist in monitoring and reporting the efforts to maintain normal life in the City of Hebron thus creating a feeling of security among the Palestinians in the City of Hebron.